

**City of Pawtucket Request for Qualifications**  
**Overpass Art: Reconnecting the City**

**Budget: \$100,000**

**Application Deadline: November 30, 2014**

**Introduction**

Artwork for the Pawtucket's Overpass Art project will be commissioned by the City of Pawtucket. Pawtucket has received an NEA Our Town Grant, which is matched by local funds, for this project. This project will involve the design, fabrication and installation of art along the fencing, at the George Street overpass, in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. This is a two-year grant project, which began in September 2014, and must be complete by September 2016. This project will have intense and inclusive community involvement. The City and its partners, including the Pawtucket Foundation, will hire a community engagement specialist to work with the community, and liaise with the artist.

***About the Project***

When Interstate 95 was initially constructed in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, it became a physical barrier which essentially cut off many of the City's neighborhoods from the downtown. This gateway project is intended to help reconnect neighborhoods to the downtown by installing community-inspired public art along the George Street overpass, which is currently a very pedestrian unfriendly place. The George Street overpass connects the downtown to the Oak Hill and Woodlawn neighborhoods, two very different but cohesive communities. The project will also include significant community outreach. The artist will not be expected to conduct the public outreach.

The *overall project* has a number of related goals:

1. To improve the pedestrian connection between the neighborhood and the downtown through the provision of public art, as well as sidewalk and street improvements, along the highway overpass;
2. To promote the City as a creative community to the state and region throughout the grant period;
3. To design and install public art which reflects Pawtucket's diverse communities and cultures;
4. To invite community engagement from all of the City's diverse communities and cultures.
5. To increase the capacity of the City's existing local artist and design groups.

The over-arching theme of this project is connections, or reconnections, and intersections. Selected artists will be asked to create a public art project that will help reconnect the City's neighborhoods to the downtown. At the same time, the project strives to make connections between all of the City's residents and the arts and artists in Pawtucket.

### ***About Pawtucket***

Pawtucket is one of the densest cities in Rhode Island. The minority population within the City, 33.5%, is high compared to 18.67% statewide. The percentage of Pawtucket residents who speak English less than very well is more than twice the State or National averages (2008-12 American Community Survey). Pawtucket's unemployment rate is 13.16, compared to 8.2 nationally (RI Department of Labor, 2012 average). The City's poverty rate (18.7%), also exceeds the national figure (14.9%).

Since the mid-twentieth century, Pawtucket has been losing jobs and residents and the quality of the built environment decreasing. In response, City aggressively pursued arts as a strategy for revitalizing the population and the urban environment. These efforts have resulted in artists and designers choosing to live and work in Pawtucket. The overpass project is an opportunity to bring people together to work collectively on the City's social cohesion – to knit together the old and the new residents.

The City views the arts and artists as an important economic development activity. Visual and performing artists have been attracted to occupy low-cost studio spaces in mill buildings that once served the City's thriving textile industry. The City has an annual Arts Festival which brings over 20,000 visitors to the City. Pawtucket also provides small project-based grants for local art projects and operational support for Pawtucket-based arts organizations. The recently formed advisory committee on Arts and Culture was established to provide some direction and consistency in the placement of public art in the City.

### ***Project Oversight and Partners***

The Steering Committee for the project is comprised of representatives from the City of Pawtucket, Pawtucket's Advisory Commission on Arts and Culture, the Pawtucket Arts Collaborative, XOS Plus, the Pawtucket Foundation and the Slater Mill. The Steering Committee will provide overall project direction and meet monthly throughout the duration of the project. The City of Pawtucket has also designated an Artist Selection committee tasked with the selection of an artist. Seven art and design professionals serve as the Artist Selection Panel for the project.

The City of Pawtucket Planning Department is working in partnership with Department of Public Works and the Building Department as well as the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to develop construction guidelines for the proposed artwork that ensure the resulting design complies with state and local regulations, is safe, and can be installed properly. Agency partners will also identify any infrastructure modifications to provide a safer, more pleasant, pedestrian experience.

The City of Pawtucket, in collaboration with Slater Mill and other project partners, will work to ensure participation in the project from a range of local residents. One planned event will feature a display of the designs submitted by the finalists for the artist selection process. Slater Mill has resources within its collections that relate to Pawtucket's early ironworks industry, and the artisan history of the community that dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The museum will assist in the curation and promotion of programming.

### ***Project Location***

Pawtucket considered a number of locations where local streets passed over Interstate 95. The one that will be used for these design improvements is the George Street overpass. This location is one of the City's gateways. There is access to Interstate 95, and this is the route that many visitors take for the downtown, Slater Mill (est. 30,000 annual visitors), or the Pawtucket Red Sox (est. 500,000 annual visitors).

### **Public Art Proposals**

The scope of the project (\$100,000) must include all materials and labor related to the artist's installation including: design fee, drawings, permitting and permit fees, equipment, supervision, materials, fabrication, testing services, RI engineer's stamp, insurance, travel, and all other costs incurred in the delivery and installation of the finished work.

A parallel community engagement effort will unfold alongside the artist selection process. The results will be communicated to the artist, to educate the artist about the Pawtucket community, and inform the final design concept. Selected artists will be asked to meet with project leadership and consultants to coordinate scope of work at key project milestones.

The final commissioned work must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act: <http://www.ada.gov/>. Durability and sustainability of the work is vital, thus designs with elaborate maintenance requirements should be avoided. In addition, the location of these designs on a highway overpass will necessitate

that they not include a level of detail which may distract drivers on Interstate 95. The design should consider both views from the highway, and multi-modal users along George Street.

### ***Submission Requirements:***

**Please note:** This Request for Qualifications is the first step in the City of Pawtucket public art selection process. **YOU ARE NOT BEING ASKED TO SUBMIT A SPECIFIC PROPOSAL.** This is a Request for Qualifications, (RFQ), not a Request for Proposals, (RFP).

Pawtucket will conduct the application process online, with all materials submitted in digital format through CaFÉ (see below). There is no charge to the artist for applying or for submitting digital images. If an artist wants to apply as an individual as well as part of a team, two separate CaFÉ profiles and two separate CaFÉ applications must be completed (i.e., one application submission for you and one for your team).

No slides or hard copy materials will be accepted for this call. First time CaFÉ applicants must allow enough time to prepare their CaFÉ formatted digital images and electronic submission prior to the deadline. CaFÉ surveys have shown that it takes approximately 2-4 hours to prepare images and submit an online application, dependent on a variety of factors.

Each application must be submitted via the CaFÉ (tm) web site (<http://bit.ly/1DwOpt9>) and must include:

1. A current resume for each artist. If you are applying as a team, include all team member resumes within one document. The resume should include the contact information for three references on projects which demonstrate the artist(s) experience with similar projects.
2. Six to ten (6 – 10) digital images of relevant artwork. In the Description of Image, accompanying image annotation must list media, size, title, date of completion and a brief description of the artwork if necessary. Please do not present more than one view of artwork per image. If you wish to show a "detail" or second view, include it within the six to ten (6 – 10) artwork images.
3. A written statement, not to exceed 1000 characters, that describes what you or your team considers the challenges to designing and installing a public art project on an highway overpass. Also, describe your experience with working with community groups in the planning and installation of public art.

**If selected as a finalist**, artists will craft detailed proposals including an itemized budget, scale models and renderings, and an in-depth project description. For this they will each be paid an honorarium of \$2,500. This stipend includes all travel expenses: hotel, transportation, mileage, etc., for both the site visit and the subsequent presentation meeting. Finalists will not be reimbursed separately for any travel costs.

### Estimated Timeline

- November 30, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. (E.S.T.): Deadline for submissions of qualifications
- January, 2015: Artist Selection Panel meeting for selection of finalists; Artist notification
- February 2015: Finalist site visits: a site visit as well as a meeting with the Department of Public Works and Rhode Island Department of Transportation will be scheduled for the finalists. An honorarium of \$2,500 will be awarded to the finalists following presentation of their proposals.
- May 2015: Finalist presentations to selection panel; commission artist

***Finalist's*** site-specific proposals should convey artist's ideas and plans through designs, renderings and/or scale models with a statement that describes the project's intent, proposed materials, fabrication and installation methods, and an itemized budget. Finalists will also be asked to explain how their artwork will be sourced and fabricated. They will be supplied with plans, photographs, and specific information about the project site.

The proposals will remain the property of the artist. However, Pawtucket reserves the right to retain proposals for up to one year for display purposes and the right to reproduce final proposals for documentation and public information purposes.

- June, 2015: Final approval by City of Pawtucket/Contract signed

The Artist Selection Panel reserves the right to determine which proposal will be funded and the extent of funding. The panel also reserves the right to not accept any final proposal submitted. The selected artist/s will enter into contract with the City of Pawtucket for the selected commission. The accepted artwork will be owned and maintained by the City of Pawtucket.

- **August 1, 2016: Work installed and completed**

### ***Selection Criteria***

The following criteria will be used for the selection of the Finalist. It will be used in this RFQ process to evaluate the submitted body of work, resume and written statement:

1. **Artistic Quality:** Demonstrated ability to provide quality and suitability of in relation to the project description, program goals and site descriptions. Demonstrated creation of aesthetic and conceptual works of art that are not simply decorative or figurative.
2. **Ability of the Artist's Team:** The artist's ability to carry out a commission, to keep the project within budget, and to complete and install the work on schedule.
3. **Value:** Demonstration that the quality and scope of completed work are appropriate for the commission and fees paid to the artist's team.
4. **Permanence and durability of materials for this heavily used public facility:** Demonstration that the artist can ensure that all artwork meets safety standards, adheres to building codes and other state regulations, and that artworks are durable and require minimal maintenance.
5. **Collaborative Spirit:** Demonstrated willingness to participate in efforts to involve the community. Willingness to coordinate with landscape architects, civil engineers, general contractor to assure smooth integration of the artwork with other pedestrian infrastructure improvements, to make necessary adjustments in relation to building codes and other construction issues.

### ***Artist Eligibility***

This call is open to all artists. Applications may be submitted individually or in collaboration with others. The panel will not discriminate against any applicant artist on the basis of age, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, national origin or physical challenges. Excluded from participation are Artist Selection Committee members and their families.

If you have questions about this RFQ, please Susan Mara:  
smara@pawtucketri.com. If you require technical support for CAFÉ, please email [cafe@westaf.org](mailto:cafe@westaf.org)